

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3147

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMCONSUL DOUALA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

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TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, NI

SUBJ: FMG CREATES SEVEN NEW STATES; FEDERAL CAPITAL TO

BE MOVED; FORMER GOVERNOR'S ASSETS CONFISCATED

1. IN DAWN BROADCAST TO NATION, HEAD OF STATE GENERAL MURTALA MUHAMMED INFORMED NIGERIANS THAT HIS GOVERNMENT, ACTING ON RECOMMENDATION STUDY COMMITTEE APPOINTED LAST YEAR, HAD DECIDED TO CREATE SEVEN ADDITIONAL STATES OUT OF THE EXISTING TWELVE (THREE EACH FROM FORMER NORTH EAST AND WESTERN REGION; TWO EACH OUT OF FORMER EAST CENTRAL, BENUE-PLATEAU AND NORTH WEST.) SOME BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN STATES (KWARA LOSES SOME DIVISIONS TO BENUE, E.G.) HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE AND COMMISSIONS WILL SETTLE OTHER MINOR PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED BY STUDY COMMISSION. MUHAMMED SAID RULING SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL HAS DECIDED THIS SETTLES QUESTION OF NEW STATES PERMANENTLY AND WARNED COUNTRYMEN THAT FMG WOULD TOLERATE NO AGITATION IN

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FAVOR OF OR IN OPPOSITION TO THIS FINAL DECISION. MILITARY

GOVERNORS HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO ALL SEVEN NEW STATES. CIVIL SERVANTS WARNED NOT TO LEAVE PRESENT POSTS UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO BY "PRESENT" GOVERNORS. ALL STATES WITH NAMES CONNOTING GEOGRAPHIC DIRECTIONS (NORTH CENTRAL, SOUTH EAST, ETC.) HAVE BEEN RENAMED TO DO AWAY WITH ANY REMNANTS OF FORMER REGIONAL DIVISIONS.

2. SMG ALSO ACCEPTED RECOMMENDATION OF PANEL WHICH STUDIED QUESTION OF LOCATION OF FEDERAL CAPITAL AND HAS DECIDED TO MOVE CAPITAL TO CENTRALLY LOCATED (UNNAMED) 8000 SQUARE KILO-METER SITE WHERE LOW POPULATION DENSITY, GOOD CLIMATE, POSSIBILITY OF GOOD COMMUNICATIONS, ADEQUATE WATER AND AVAILABILITY OF LAND MAKE CONSTRUCTION NEW CAPITAL FEASIBLE. SITE WILL BE OUTSIDE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE OF ANY OF THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS. PROCESS WILL TAKE FROM TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS, AND LAGOS IS TO REMAIN COMMERCIAL AND SHIPPING NERVE CENTER WITH SPECIAL STATUS WHICH IS TO BE WRITTEN INTO NEW CONSTITUTION (PORT HARCOURT AND KADUNA ARE ALSO TO HAVE SIMILAR SPECIAL STATUS). CAPITAL OF LAGOS STATE TO BE MOVED TO IKEJA. PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENT, ABUJA AND LOKOJA WERE FAVORITES AS SITES FOR NEW CAPITAL. DECREE TO BE ISSUED SOON BY SMG WHICH SHOULD NAME SITE AND APPOINT CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PANEL WHOSE CHAIRMAN WILL HAVE CABINET RANK.

3. IN ADDITION, MUHAMMED ANNOUNCED THAT ALL BUT TWO OF FORMER GOVERNORS WHO RETIRED AT TIME OF LAST YEAR'S COUP HAD BEEN FOUND TO HAVE GROSSLY ABUSED OFFICE AND THAT ASSETS TOTALLING OVER TEN MILLION NAIRA HAD BEEN CONFISCATED. THE TEN (NAMES OF THE TWO HONEST ONES NOT ANNOUNCED) HAD BEEN DISMISSED WITH IGNOMINY AND IMMEDIATE EFFECT. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND POLICE WILL LOOK INTO CRIMINAL ASPECTS OF FORMER GOVERNORS' CONDUCT.

4. FURTHER COMMENT AND NAMES OF NEW STATE GOVERNORS (ALL MILITARY) FOLLOW.
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